

# Promise Community Initiative - Frequently Asked Questions

## February 26, 2015

*“None of us can truly tap the potential that is out there until we become involved with the people of our communities in promoting the well-being of everyone’s children.” ~ Con Hogan*

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### General Questions

#### **What is a community?**

Promise Communities are based around the elementary school as the central element of community. This is NOT a school-based program that we are developing. School role is more about where the young children will end up for K and in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Overall size is not as large as a whole county or Agency of Human Services district. It is fine if two Supervisory Unions/districts join, or parts of Supervisory Unions join with elementary schools to be a community. The minimum number of children in the population of birth to 6 year olds we want to serve is 40, so if a town does not have 40 young children then they need to partner with another town.

#### **We have a great program we want to expand; can we apply to Promise Communities to do this?**

No. This is not a program level initiative. We are interested in the community and developing a road map based on the needs assessment of the community to determine the implementation plan.

#### **What is the role of the coaches?**

Promise Community Coaches work in your community for the first two years of the Promise Community Initiative. They will lead the Needs Assessment and facilitate the planning of your "Community Roadmap." They are available to gather partners to the table, facilitate meetings, build community capacity in evaluation and planning, and collaborate with state level stakeholders. Their primary goal is to ensure that your community continues working together to 'turn the curve' for your children: using collaborative evidence based approaches, sticking to timelines, and communicating results.

#### **The timeframe is so tight, how will we ever put together our partners and plan in time?**

While it is a tight timeline, we are not asking you to finalize anything during this time. We have provided the necessary community data and list of required signatories. Any additional partners are up to your group and not carved in stone. Once selected, the coach will work with your community to refine and enlarge the "promise community team." This is not a usual grant proposal; please think of it more like a "Letter of Interest." Any strategizing, planning, or negotiations can wait until after your community is selected. No plan is asked for in this process, just partnership and show of need.

#### **I am a community member, not affiliated with any agencies or organizations; can I apply on behalf of my community?**

Not by yourself. The Promise Communities opportunity is a community initiative, so it is great you are on board. At the same time, to create a sustainable system to better support 0-6 year olds it is important to have key community partners on board that have the capacity to continue this work. Local and state agencies and organizations need to be part of this important work, thus we have required signatories in the application process and for involvement in the planning process and implementation. This is a collaborative process and we expect to be working with multiple partners within each community and community members.

#### **I work for an agency and have a community in mind that would benefit greatly by becoming a Promise Community. Can I apply for them?**

It is essential that community members and local agencies/organizations be excited to become a Promise Community. The work will be done in the

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community and to benefit the community, so the actual community (see the list of possible signatures requested in the application for who these partners are) needs to be part of the process and be on board.

### **How would I know if anyone else in my community is applying to be a Promise Community?**

Please contact your Building Bright Futures Regional Coordinator and/ or your Agency of Human Services Field Director they will help you coordinate with others in your community who may have expressed an interest in applying.

### **I heard there is seed money, to help us execute our "Community Roadmap" (plan). Does this money need to be spent during the year in which we are implementing our plan?**

Not necessarily. We will work out the specifics of each grant with each community.

### **What is the role of the Building Bright Futures Regional Coordinator? Does my community need their help to apply?**

BBF regional coordinators are required signatories on the applications. They may help communities collaborate in the application process.

### **I see that Results Based Accountability (RBA) will be used to facilitate the Community Roadmap for our community. Do we need to be trained in**

### **RBA?**

No. Knowledge of RBA is helpful but not required. The Promise Community Coach working with your community will help facilitate the Community Roadmap process using RBA. Additionally the Promise Community Team includes an outside evaluation team well versed in RBA.

### **Does a Promise Community need to provide evaluators for this initiative?**

No. The Promise Community Initiative has evaluators to work with communities to assist in developing evaluation plans and to evaluate the Promise Communities Initiative at the state and community level.

### **Can Organizations or Regions become Promise Communities?**

No. Organizations are expected to collaborate with other organizations/agencies and community stakeholders to form a unified Promise Community. Promise Communities are a town level initiative and the exact catchment area of a community varies; it can be as small as an elementary school or as large as a Supervisory Union but not as big as an Agency of Human Services district or county.

### **When will a recorded version of the webinar be made public?**

The Webinar is posted on the CDD website: [http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/promise\\_communities](http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/promise_communities)

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## **Data Questions**

**The data sheets presented in the Promise Community Application packet give the Free and Reduced Price Lunch rates (poverty indicator) by Supervisory Union. When our community applies, can we use town-level data to show that our particular town/community has a higher rate of poverty than our SU?**

Yes. When providing your community story in the Promise Communities Application, please provide

us with specific data about your town or community. We want to understand the needs of the particular community applying.

**I do not see my particular Supervisory Union in some of the data sets. Why?**

There are various reasons data may not be available for any particular data set. Often, an SU changed its collection method or a sample is too



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small to be public. The original data source is listed at the top of each data set. Please feel free to pull data relevant to your community from each of those sources. When applying, you can use town/community-level data to create the story for your community.

**Our team is trying to understand the data listed on Attachment 7. We are confused by the number listed in the "Capacity" column on the same row as the town name. It seems like this is supposed to represent the total capacity of child care slots in the community, but the number does not reflect what we know about our communities. For example, Cabot says 145. In Cabot, there is the**

**public school program that has 15 slots and 4 or 5 home care providers. This does not add to 145.**

**Could you clarify?**

The data provided is based on the number of spaces the programs have reported they desire to care for – it is not the licensed capacity. However, in this specific example the number **includes a school age program** that has space for 100 children. This program may only operate in the summer; however they are licensed to operate all year, so this is included information in the data.

For data questions please email [Julianne.nickerson@state.vt.us](mailto:Julianne.nickerson@state.vt.us) for clarification.

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### Required Application Signatures Questions

**Can Building Bright Futures (BBF) sign off on more than one application?**

Yes. The BBF council in your region can (and we hope will) sign off on multiple applications. The sign off process is designed to ensure open communication among important stakeholders. It is not designed to exclude or prioritize at the district level.

**Can someone other than a principal or superintendent sign off on the application?**

No. A principal and superintendent need to sign your application to reflect leadership support for this initiative; however this does not mean that they will be your school's lead on the initiative. Key partners can be school nurses, teachers, PTOs, special education, guidance counselors, essentially anyone in the educational community dedicated to 'turning the curve' for the community's young children.

**If our community is between two districts does it matter which AHS field services director and BBF coordinator signs off?**

All towns are officially designated to an Agency of Human Service District or a Building Bright futures

region. Links to the BBF coordinators and the AHS field directors are on the CDD website ([http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/promise\\_communities](http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/promise_communities)). If you believe the one connected to your community does not fit or you are split between two, the community can decide which region is considered more of your "home" for this initiative. You could pick a district that houses more of your non-profit partners, where your citizens tend to buy groceries, or alternatively where you would like to form closer bonds. It is really up to your coalition to decide.

**How do I know which Building Bright Futures Coordinator to sign off on my application?**

Please check the Building Bright Futures website to see which region your community lies within or the CDD website (<http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd>) with the link to the BBF regional coordinator list. If you cannot determine which region your community is in, please contact the nearest BBF Coordinator and open the discussion regarding your Promise Community application. A BBF coordinator needs to sponsor your application, be sure you connect with them about the application.



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### **Does the representative from a child health medical practice need to be a pediatrician?**

A pediatrician or a family practice physician can be the person who represents the medical field, they do not need to practice in the community but need to serve the families who live there. Your local Maternal Child Health Coordinator (MCH) can help you identify this person; MCH coordinators signature does not replace a person from a medical practice.